

We voted for it. We talked about it. We go back home and tell our constituents we have done it. The President says we are doing it. The Secretary of Homeland Security says we are doing it. We have not accomplished much, but the Guard has played a role by using their engineering capability. Frankly, if they had been focused more on actual barriers, they probably would have accomplished more.

The real reason is the way we planned this out has been very slow in development, in terms of building our fencing. In fact, we are informed that the fencing numbers are improving right now; that miles of fencing are appearing and coming much more rapidly on line than before. If you examine the situation closely, you will see there appears to be a move afoot to draw this out and end up with far less fencing than the Congress contemplated both with our authorization and appropriations bills.

The Department of Homeland Security indicates that the Guard's presence will have an even greater impact on tactical infrastructure over the next year:

The deployments will be focused on providing a greater residual value by raising the percentage of troops that are working on tactical infrastructure projects. This infrastructure will greatly enhance the ability of the men and women of the border patrol to access the border and be more effective in the enforcement efforts for many years to come.

OK. What they are saying is they have projected in the coming months that the Guard is going to be even more effective because they will be providing a greater residual value by raising the percentage of troops working on infrastructure projects. Now, there are people who don't want infrastructure at the border, and they would like to bring the troops home, I suppose, before that happens. That would be a big mistake.

The National Guard is helping the border to save lives. In the last year, they have rescued 91 people—illegal aliens—in the area who were in desperate trouble for lack of water or being lost. They rescued them. Now, this is what has happened. Despite the proven success of the program, the operation is scheduled to stop by next July. Troops are already being reduced. By the end of July, troops were down to 4,500; that is July of 2007. By the end of August of this year, troops were down to 3,500. So it dropped even more. Today, only 3,000 personnel are on Operation Jump Start orders, and, of those, only 2,300 are actually at the border.

So already there has been a draw-down of more than half of the National Guard personnel, and not communicating that to the American people is leaving us in a difficult situation, I suggest. The National Guard was supposed to fill the gap until 6,000 new Border Patrol agents could be recruited, hired, trained, and stationed at the border. That goal has only been

accomplished halfway. Only 3,000 new agents have joined the 1,000 who were on the border when President Bush announced Operation Jump Start. The National Guard is assisting in fence and other critical infrastructure construction.

The Secure Fence Act that we passed mandated that the Department of Homeland Security construct more than 700 miles of new fencing. The administration's goal apparently is not to do that. Apparently it is to just complete 300 miles by the end of the whole next year, 2008. So with 2 years of authorization and funding, they will have only completed less than half of the fencing. To date, only 70 new miles have been constructed, for a total of 145 miles of fencing on the border. That is not the kind of signal we need to be sending.

The reason that is important is because it has a psychological impact, as well as an actual apprehension impact. What about alien apprehensions? To date, alien apprehensions on the border are down 25 percent. While this is positive, because it indicates the attempts at crossings are likely down by 25 percent as well, the job is certainly not finished. The year before that, we arrested 1 million people at the border. Can you imagine that? One million people were arrested at the border. It is not an exaggeration to say that it is a wide-open, lawless area that needs attention from our Government. If we don't give it, we are breaking faith with the American people because we have said we are going to fix that, we are going to do something about it. We just haven't.

I have to tell you there are some people who really don't care about it. They talk about it, but they don't care. We have some progress; 25 percent is a lot. It is not insignificant. But if we really got that fencing up and built, if we kept the National Guard down at the border, if we broaden the Border Patrol and motivate them to be as effective as they possibly could be, I absolutely believe—absolutely believe—we can reach a tipping point where the whole world begins to say the border of the United States is no longer wide open; that you can get in trouble going across there. Most people are getting caught. It is an entirely different place, so maybe we better not try it this time. Maybe somebody suggested we can do that, but that is not a good idea. But for the last 20 years-plus, it has been a well-known fact worldwide that you can just walk across our border, if you have very much initiative, and be successful at it. If they catch you, nothing ever happens.

Now, I will conclude by noting that, according to the year review of Operation Jump Start:

OJS is one of the many enforcement initiatives employed to expand enforcement capabilities to gain better operational control along the Southwest border. OJS, combined with other initiatives, such as Operation Streamline, Zero Tolerance, Arizona Border

Control Initiative, and the Expedited Removal Program, has resulted in a cumulative, positive impact on current levels of border control.

Good news. A positive impact. What it should do is give us encouragement. If we will just follow through, expand what we are doing, adjust to the changing tactics of those who want to enter illegally, and do it with will and determination and a positive attitude, we can make a difference. We can end this open border, end the illegality that has made the immigration system a mockery of law and an embarrassment to our people.

Operation Jump Start is a proven success. It is a critical component of our strategy. Guardsmen are filling critical law enforcement roles. They are building fencing and infrastructure and interdicting narcotics and conducting surveillance and reconnaissance; and, by the way, a substantial majority of our cocaine and methamphetamines, for that matter, are coming into our country through Mexico. I talk to law enforcement officers in Alabama all the time. They say we used to get a lot out of Miami and south Florida. Now it is all coming across the Mexican border. So we have a law enforcement interest in this also.

There is no reason Operation Jump Start should end this June. At a minimum, it should be extended until all 6,000 Border Patrol agents are on duty. The way we have been going, we authorize it and say we are going to add 6,000 Border Patrol agents, and they don't get added, if you want to know the truth. We have seen that happen time and time again. They said we were going to continue this Operation Jump Start and the National Guard, but we have already reduced our Guard personnel by more than half. That adds credibility problems with the American people. No wonder they are suspicious about what we are doing here. This amendment will provide the needed funding to keep Operation Jump Start at its original capacity, 6,000 Guard personnel, instead of what they have planned now. It makes no sense to the American people to say we found something that is effective, that is beginning to work to reduce the illegality we are facing, but we are stopping the program before the job is done. The border is not yet secure. It is too early to end this program. We need to step it up, and I think we will be in a position to have greater progress than anyone can imagine.

Madam President, to sum up, the good news is we have made some progress, but we have not really begun to get to finishing up. If we get the fencing up and keep our Guard there full-time and get our new Border Patrol agents up and we move to ending the catch-and-release and adopt the Texas plan, where individuals are prosecuted for violating the laws by entering illegally—that has reduced border crossings in that area by 45 percent or more—and if we can do other things